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Col. John Thirtybirds Wright.  
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Col. John Thirtybirds Wright represents in his person an elegant profusely illustrated edition of self-made manhood.

We may go a step further and add that he is bound in Morocco, with gilt edges and gold clasps. He is printed on the thickest paper and illustrated with numerous full-page steel engravings and is sold by subscription only.

Col. Wright was born near the eastern boundary of the United States of Trigg County, an independent republic lying contiguous to which is at present the jumping-off place of the Indiana, Alabama & Trigg County Railroad. This vast and to a great extent unexplored region sends forth many great men to make their mark in the broad world outside, and while Col. Wright can not boast that he is "from North Carolina, near the Virginia line," he can at least truthfully claim that he is from the Bahbridge district near the Trigg county line.

Of his early life we are sorry to say we are totally and painfully ignorant. Enough is known, however, to establish the fact that Col. Wright was at the time of his birth, smaller and even uglier than he is now. It is said that his homeliness was so conspicuous that his very ugliness stopped the old family clock which had been ticking away for years on the mantel-piece. But beauty, at best, is but skin deep, and Col. Wright should not be censured for his lack of personal pulchritude.

At the age of five years our hero was accidentally lost while being taken to town to have his picture taken. Some means he succeeded in getting the door of his cage open and escaped without being observed. Absolutely nothing is known of his subsequent career for the next ten years. He became wild and lived entirely in the woods, never approaching the haunts of men.

He finally worked his way into this vicinity and about ten years ago a party of small boys, who were eating blackberries not far from Hopkinsville, came running home with ashens faces and hair standing on end and reported that they had seen a wild man in the blackberry patch and that when he saw them he immediately ran away and disappeared in the woods. The boys were laughed at, but the next day a different party brought in the same report, and great excitement was created. The boys stated that they had never seen anything like it. It had long hair that hung down over its shoulders and keen little black eyes that looked at them in a frightened way. One of the bravest of the boys tried to approach near enough to catch it by putting salt on it, but it had sped away on the wings of the wind as soon as they approached it. To say that the city was excited does not convey the idea. Nothing else was thought of and talked of, and the male population turned out the next day for the purpose of catching the wild man. The blackberry patch was surrounded at the hour at which he was known to take his meal and there sure enough was the object they were seeking. The circle around the patch was gradually closed up, and when at last the wild man, rather shyly, attempted to break through the line he was captured by Honest John Mayon, who returned with him in triumph to the city.

Mr. Mayon refused many large offers for his captive, which was, as the reader already knows, none other than John Thirtybirds Wright in his fifteen-year-old form. His captor after wearing him as a watch-chain for several years determined to try the experiment of educating him for business, as he had become quite tame and perfectly harmless. Our hero was accordingly given a course of instruction and the rapidity with which he learned surprised the natives. In an incredibly short time he had acquired a thorough knowledge of the mercantile business and after remaining with his captor until he attained his majority he graduated with the rank of Colonel and struck out on his own for himself. The last four years Col. Wright has amassed a large fortune and now ranks with the self-made millionaires of Hopkinsville. He is at present engaged in the clothing and gents' furnishing business on Main street.

To be a yachtsman one must own a white dandy, a couple brass buttons, a white cap with gold braid and an idea that he owns the earth. It is not necessary to own a yacht.

## CONTEMPT OF COURT.

There was a case of contempt, the lawyer said, and he seemed not to tell, when asked by a friend, the matter apod, that his suit was prospective well. Though young he argued his case with power. As soon as the writ was returned, and argued so long that the midnight hour came on the "court" adjourned. But her father came down and the case he closed. By looking the youth on sight, and the father declared such an act opposed to legal procedure quite. And he said to the maid, as he rubbed his nose. He would bring an action of tort. And ask the Judge to punish a fine. On her part for contempt of "court."

## AMONG THE INSANE.

Some of the Popular Characters at the Dayton, (O.) Asylum.

A Beautiful Crazy Woman Who Wanted to Boil the Men's Souls—Charles's Trip to Cincinnati and His Claims of Billiards—The Sland of Unfortunate.

In the past few weeks I have spent, upon different occasions, a portion of a day in the Dayton Asylum for Insane, and have picked up quite a number of matters which I believe will be of interest. One of the first matters of consequence that dawned on my mind was the fact that many institutions where six hundred individuals benefit of the power of their reason are huddled together, there surely must be skeletons in the closet, and this thought is strengthened by the fact that there is a perceptible effort on the part of all the officials and attendants of the institution to be as obliging and polite as possible, yet they none of them, showed any desire to talk of the various matters that wanted to learn something about. And this was not because of my fear of newspaper notoriety, as not a living soul but myself knew I was collecting material for a newspaper letter. It seems to be the even tenor of their ways with all "doctors, and indeed it could not be otherwise, if the welfare of the institution is to be considered, for were they to tell the secrets of a hospital of this kind the people would be shocked with amazement. I know from what I learned that there are secrets in this asylum which even the officials know nothing.

This morning I picked up through a reporter in this city previous to my visit to the asylum, and I reproduce it here because of its fantastic eccentricity. The young man who tells the story is now engaged in this city, though previously he was in the employ of the asylum. Among the numerous patients of the institution are a great many who are allowed to walk about in the grounds. Among this number was a young woman, who shortly after the birth of her first child became insane. She was an extremely handsome creature, who when talked to gave indications of a weak mind. She came from some small place in Preble County. Before her mind gave way she was known as a happy, vivacious creature, who enjoyed life, but after becoming insane she took a religious turn and then became melancholy, and would not talk except when it was necessary. She was a handy person about the asylum, and could be put at most any work. Her name was Mabel, and she probably had more sympathetic friends than any other patient in the institution, which can be attributed to her beauty of face.

One day she accosted my informant, asking him if he did not want to see her two souls. The question was natural, aroused the young man's curiosity, and he followed her into the cellar of one of the buildings adjoining the asylum proper. She took him to the darkest corner, where she held up before him a two-ounce bottle she had taken from a medicine chest, and exclaimed: "There they are, and bound to keep 'em. The one is the soul of Stenwall Jackson, and the other my husband's." The young man took the bottle near or to the faint rays of light that shot from the cellar grating, and saw that the bottom was covered with greenish liquid, evidently water discolored by age. The lady maniac went on to explain there was no need of any souls being lost; that she could save them all if the people would only let her cut them out and put them into her bottle. She knew the soul's home was on top the head, and could be cut out without any trouble.

Stenwall Jackson's soul was in the bottle when she got it from the spirits, and she had since put her husband's in. After explaining all these things she asked the young man for his pen-knife, and told him if he would try down she would get his soul out in a few minutes, and put it in the bottle for him. The young man, however, declined the offer, and seemed to have no desire to have his soul preserved. This young lady has since recovered, and is now at home with her family, attending to her household duties as well as any woman in the land of the free.

A cunning maniac was Charles, the son of a wealthy and widely known family living in Miami County. Just beyond the Montgomery County line. He had used the term "was" because he has been cured of the particular attack of which he was suffering at the time of which I write, but has since become insane again and is now an inmate of a private asylum in Cincinnati. He is a magnificent-looking young man of not more than thirty years of age, and when not suffering from the dread affliction to which he seems to be subject, is one of the most entertaining men possible to find anywhere. These things I say of him because I know them to be facts. When suffering from the awful disease he is, indeed, a raving maniac, though never very threatening. He is a very ingenious fellow at all times, and this is what always made him a troublesome prisoner.

At night, when the patients in a ward are locked in their rooms, they place their clothes outside of the door in the hallway, so that an attendant knows they are all in their places. This is always done. On a certain night the attendant of the ward in which Charles was a patient performed his duty and retired, feeling confident every thing was secure and all right. But for two or three nights previous to that Charles had been at work on the heavy iron bars on his window with a file he had procured somewhere—evidently from one of the insane who had the privilege of the grounds. On the night in question he completed his work, filing through one bar and springing

two others so he could get out. But there were his clothes outside the door and his overcoat in the closet room at the end of the hallway. These he needed, for it was a bitter cold night in midwinter. With his file he worked the wood away from the locks in both doors, got his clothes, overcoat and all, and soon was tramping through Dayton.

He went direct to the depot and got on top the last car of the midnight express, bound for Cincinnati. So thoughtful was he that he inquired as to what stations the train stopped at, and when it left Hamilton he ran forward to the first car, and when the conductor passed through he clambered down on the top while the train was running thirty miles or more an hour, and took a seat in the vacant car, as independent as if he was the President of the road. The conductor did not come through the train again, for Hamilton was the last stop before reaching Cincinnati, and Charles, insane as he was, seemed to understand that he was safe inside the car after it left Hamilton, for the train, making no stops, could, of course, not take on any passengers. That he remained on top the car in the bitter cold until the train reached this point is evidence conclusive that he knew exactly what he was doing.

He reached Cincinnati without any trouble, went straight to the Gibson House and registered. As luck would have it, the next person to register, who stepped up to the counter not ten minutes after he left it, was an acquaintance of his from his home. The man met his eye, and after speaking to the clerk he managed to catch sight of Charles as he came from the bath-room. The friend at once recognized his folks, and they the asylum authorities. The telegram they received was the first intimation the officials of the institution had that any one had escaped.

Charles was busy playing billiards when, at ten o'clock the same morning, his clerk called into the hall and snatched him on the back.

"Hello, Tom," was Charles's greeting. "I've got a sucker here." The same evening he was again in the asylum, but it amused him for weeks to think how he "went to Cincinnati just to play a game of billiards," as he put it.

If over a man had determined to do, come what may, that man was Francis, a powerful farmer from Auglaize County. He was one of the few farmers who take a great interest in politics, and the first symptoms of insanity in his case were noticed after he was defeated for an office at the polls. Francis followed financial reverses, and finally his mind gave way to the extent that he was determined on self-destruction. He was sent to this asylum and placed with the other unfortunate sufferers from suicidal mania. (He was not by any means a dangerous man, but an eye had to be kept on him all the time to keep him from destroying his own life in one way or another.)

Tom, a young but powerful man, was his keeper. Besides Francis there were twenty-four other maniacs in the ward, and one can easily imagine what a nice time an attendant must have while watching and caring for these poor people. Every keeper must shave his patients at stated intervals, and one day when Tom had one of his subjects in the chair he complained of the razor scratching him, whereupon Tom hid it on the window-sill and got out another one. While he was stripping it he noticed Francis standing in the door, looking furtively into the room. Before he could think the maniac bounded by him and had caught up the razor in his hand. He laid on the window-sill in his hand. It was no time for thought, but action was what was needed. Turning quickly, Tom grasped the hand in which the maniac held the razor, while he in turn, equally on the alert, grasped Tom by the wrist of the hand in which he held the open razor with which he had been beating the stick.

"Let go!" yelled Tom. "Let go yourself!" retorted the maniac, glaring savagely at the attendant.

The next instant began a battle for life. The two men pushed, tugged and twisted, but neither could be forced to loosen his hold on the other's wrist. Finally, Tom took to his chair, and was unconcerned as if nothing unusual was going on. Finally the insane man got his feet entangled in an old coat lying on the floor, when the keeper managed to throw him and wrench the razor from him. Francis got up, gave Tom a terrible look and walked from the room. In a few minutes he returned and, as if nothing had happened, he laid the razor on the floor, and only fought for the razor because he wanted to cut his own throat. He said:

"Tom, I ain't mad at you, but I want you to know, once for all, that I am going to cut my throat, and I'll do it, no matter how much you watch me." And, indeed, he kept his word.

The next day Tom was aroused by a terrible crash of falling glass at the extreme end of the ward, where is located the wash and bath-rooms. He ran to the place, and there stood Francis with his throat cut almost from ear to ear. He laughed derisively at Tom as he entered the room. He had broken the window with his fist, and with a piece of the glass cut his throat. He had severed the windpipe, and when he attempted to laugh a guttural sound was all that could be heard.

Tom grasped the gaping wound in one hand and held it together as much as possible to stop the flow of blood as much as he was in power. Two of the asylum physicians were on hand almost immediately. They took the patient in hand, and by sheer force sewed up the horrible wound, but as soon as the maniac was put to bed he tore out the stitches. The wound was sewed up a second time, and the suicide's hands lashed in a pair of leather cuffs, when he managed to tear the stitches by jerking his hand backward and forward, and from side to side. He was then put in a crib, and a box made to place his head and shoulders in, so that it was utterly impossible for him to move the least bit. He was kept in this contrivance for nearly seven weeks; much of which time it was very doubtful whether he would recover or not. After being taken from the crib he was transferred to ward 19. His hands for a long time afterward were kept in the leather cuffs, but he finally induced the attendant, on promise to not again attempt suicide, to take them off. Tom, his old attendant, upon learning of this, called on the new keeper and told him he would regret taking off the cuffs before the work was over, and sure enough he did. The third day after the cuffs were taken off the attendant was in his room cutting a small piece of tobacco off of a large plug with a small pen-knife, when Francis sprang into the room, grasped the knife out of his hand, and before the keeper could interfere, drew it across his own throat. It then became necessary to put him back in the crib again, where he was kept another spell of several weeks, but the doctors again pulled him through. He

never after that attempted suicide. One remarkable feature about this man's case was that he never attempted or seemed to contemplate ending his life any other way than by cutting his throat. After recovering from his second terrible experience he seemed to improve. He continued growing better, until finally his folks, upon their own responsibility, took him home, where he continued doing well until some time in May last, when he again showed symptoms of returning insanity, but before he grew bad enough to be returned to the asylum, he was kicked on the head by a horse, sustaining a fractured skull, which in the course of a few days resulted in his death.

Many other equally as thrilling and horrible truths can be picked up at almost any insane asylum of any note. Many more incidents that would make very interesting reading came to my notice during my visits, some of them very ludicrous, others pathetic, while the above are among the most terrible. There is one old man at present in the Dayton Asylum who donated \$100 to the institution when it was built, and this fact is one of the very few things he never loses sight of. It seems to burn into the poor fellow's very soul. There are a number of the inmates who in some way have got it into their poor brains that they are there waiting for pay-day, and the attendants tell me it is very touching when several of them become impatient and demand their money on threats to leave. They often claim their wives and children are starving, and they must have the money or they will die. It is utterly impossible for one to imagine the harrowing thoughts that a short stay of an insane asylum and its patients will awaken. It must be experienced to be appreciated.—Ida May, in Cincinnati Enquirer.

## IT WAS ONLY BLACK SAND.

Thrilling Experiences of a Captain on the Erie Canal.

A New England skipper, a shipping clerk and the Captain of a canal-boat sat on the lee of a fishy schooner and discussed the merits of the American merchant marine. The clerk was wise in the points of law, the skipper was fitted to overweigh with weight against the land-sharks at Washington, and the Captain assented with cheerful readiness to the most onerous of opinions. The clerk wanted to reform Congress in the Congress of the shipper, the skipper was on the point of blowing up the Capitol with dynamite, and the Captain ended with both opinions by remarking that either remedy, if successfully carried into effect, would produce astonishing results. Still, he ventured to suggest, it would be a measure of precaution to use gunpowder instead of dynamite as a ship-borer, even the shot-gang of the South was more deadly than all the dynamite in the British Isles.

"But it's so dangerous to handle," said the skipper.

"How so?" inquired the clerk, who had handled uncounted tons of explosive.

"You never can tell it from black sand," said the Captain.

There was silence for several minutes. Then the Captain spoke.

"A black sand particularly dangerous," he asked.

"Mighty dangerous,"

"How so?" asked the clerk, with a tinge of humiliation for his ignorance.

"When you're down on a black sand, and you load up your gun with black sand in mistake for powder to repel an attack by pirates, you're always sure to be murdered, because the black sand will not go off."

"Want it?" asked the Captain, in a tone that implied that it would.

"I don't want it," said the skipper. The clerk was dumb through newly found ignorance.

"You see that snarl," said the Captain, pointing to a red ridge across his cheek. "Well, give us the story," urged the skipper.

"It was years ago," began the Captain; "I was running a fast packet line on the Erie canal from Albany to Buffalo. I had a beautiful boat and four fast horses (very few now). We carried the mail and always had a big load of passengers. One trip we took on board a lot of small barrels labeled 'black sand.' One of the barrels was accidentally broken open, the cover lost, and a quart or so of the 'black sand' scattered about the hold. The barrel was set out of the way near the wing scull, and apparently was forgotten. At dinner time some more wine was wanted by some of the passengers, and I went down to draw it from the cask. As the hold was dark I took a broken piece of candle for a light. Scarcely knowing what I did I stuck the candle upright in the 'black sand,' and as I drew it out the floor began to draw the wine. I had been up all night and was very tired, and some how or other I fell asleep. I must have shut off the faucet while asleep, for when I awoke the wine pitcher was filled and the faucet closed. As I reached out my hand to take up the candle I saw a sight that froze my blood with horror. While I had slept on the candle had burned low and was on the point of flickering out. In another instant the flame would reach the powder—for of course it was powder, and not black sand—and blow back, crew, and passengers to atoms. I died a thousand deaths in an instant. I was paralyzed with fear, and could only wait with staring eyes for the end. Death was already at my throat. The sound of laughter in the cabin came strangely to my ears. They were feasting in the face of a terrible death. At last the end came; the light flickered for a moment, flared up for the last time, and then—"

"And then?" whispered the skipper and the clerk with breathless interest.

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